

Opening Statement
Chairman Mike Doyle
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Hearing on “Legislating to Safeguard the Free and Open Internet.”
March 12, 2019

I am very pleased to welcome everyone to the Subcommittee on Communication and Technology’s first legislative hearing of this new Congress.

Today, we will be discussing the Save the Net Act, which I introduced last week along with 132 of our colleagues here in the House.

This legislation would restore popular, bipartisan, common sense net neutrality protections – and put a cop back on the beat to protect consumers, small businesses, and competitors from unjust and unreasonable practices by Internet Service Providers.

In addition, this bill would give the FCC the authority to protect consumers now and in the future through forward-looking regulatory authority.

Finally, the bill would restore the Commission’s legal authority to support broadband access and deployment programs through the Universal Service Fund.

These programs pay for the deployment of broadband in rural communities through the Connect America Fund – and support access to working families, seniors, and veterans through the LifeLine program.

The Save the Internet Act would enact permanent, effective Net Neutrality protections into law by codifying the FCC’s 2015 Open Internet Order as a new free-standing section (title?) in the U.S. Code.

That would ensure the Internet remains an open platform for innovation and competition, regardless of political changes at the FCC.

By authorizing the order as a free-standing part of the U.S. Code, this legislation also permanently prevents the FCC from applying 27 sections of the Communications Act as well as over 700 regulations, the majority of Title 2, to Internet Service Providers.

The bill also permanently prohibits the FCC from engaging in rate regulation or requiring that broadband providers unbundle their network.

Lasts, but not least, the Save the Internet Act restores the Commission’s ability to police unjust and unreasonable practices by ISPs.

The approach that we’re discussing here today charts a new course for Net Neutrality, and puts in place 21st Century rules for a 21st Century Internet.

In doing so, we remove much of the regulatory overhang of Title 2 that ISPs and our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have long complained about.

Opponents of this legislation need to explain to their constituents which unjust and unreasonable practices they want ISPs to engage in – and why they want to allow such practices.

Americans broadly and overwhelmingly support these rules. Polls have shown that 88% of Republicans, Independents, and Democrats support restoring strong Net Neutrality protections.

This bill is a new approach, and an open invitation to our colleagues and ISPs alike to come together and support a new way forward – because a free and open internet is critical for so many communities and sectors of our economy, and because broadband connectivity touches almost aspect of our economy, politics, and culture.

I encourage my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to seriously consider this legislation.

Whether you are a rural broadband provider based in Idaho like Mr. Green’s company Fat-Beam, or you are working to ensure that minority and under-represented voices get heard online like Ms. Oh-chill-oh’s organization, or you have heard from the millions of constituents who have called or emailed their elected representatives, the message people are sending is clear.

We need to restore strong Net Neutrality rules, and that is exactly what this bill does.

Together we hope to advance this legislation through the Congress and restore these essential protections for all Americans.

I would also like to remind Members, and particularly my friends on the other side of the aisle that this is the bill that is before the committee today, and this is the issue we are discussing.

I’m happy to talk to members about other issues and the appropriate time for them to be brought before the subcommittee, but for today this bill is the subject of our discussion.

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